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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON
NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: UNAMID NIGHT FLIGHT CLARIFICATION

¶1. (U) On August 17, the Sudan Tribune online reported that the GoS has permitted UNAMID to conduct night flights in Darfur. The article reports that "eight months after the start of the hybrid mission, the Sudanese government agreed to allow the AU-UN peacekeeping force to fly at night, the head of UNAMID said today."

¶2. (SBU) On August 19, Adam Day, the assistant to Joint Special Representative Rodolphe Adada, told poloff that the Sudan Tribune report was exaggerated and "not true." According to Day, the GoS agreed "in principle" to UNAMID night flights, once UNAMID completes upgrades (i.e. extending the runway and adding lights) to the airports in Darfur. Day said that UNAMID has the capability to land their planes even without these improvements, as demonstrated by one landing in an exceptional case. However, he continued, the GoS will not allow night landings until the upgrades allow all planes to conduct such night landings on a routine basis.

¶3. (SBU) Day said that both UNAMID and the GoS are responsible for this continued misunderstanding. He said the GoS could improve the situation by allowing UNAMID to speed deployment by allowing UNAMID to land their planes at night while upgrades are ongoing. For their part, UNAMID could improve the situation by delivering material needed for the upgrades to the airports as soon as possible. Day said that UNAMID is expected to provide all material for the upgrades to the airports. Day did not specify whether UNAMID would also be solely responsible for completing all of the work for the upgrades. Day said there have been approximately one-half dozen meetings such as this, where "we have not gotten into these specifics, and we never quite nail down what is going to happen."

¶4. (SBU) Day noted this issue continues to be an important one for UNAMID, as an agreement on night landings would more than double the number of flights bringing contingent-owned equipment into Darfur. Day said that the next 10-12 days before Ramadan will be crucial, as work will come to a standstill during the entire month. Day added that UNAMID and the GoS were drafting an MOU on UNAMID presence in Sudanese airports that should be completed in the next two weeks.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: As is often the case with the AU/UN's efforts in Darfur, the blame for the ongoing difficulty with night flights seems to fall both on the GoS and UNAMID. The GoS wants to benefit from UNAMID's work in Darfur and expand its transportation infrastructure, while UNAMID wants to move material into Darfur expending the least possible effort. Both of these are reasonable expectations, but what is unreasonable, and should be pointed out to both parties, is that the people of Darfur continue to be plagued by insecurity while slow UNAMID deployment brings little relief. If UNAMID is serious about engaging with the GoS on this issue and solving the problem of night flights, it needs to find out precisely what is required to upgrade the airports and then get the job done.

Emboffs will discuss this with UNAMID during a field visit to El Fasher next week.

ASQUINO